

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 10-14, 29-31 and 36-39, and amend Claim 45-48 as follows. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application is presented below. Changes in the currently amended claim(s) are shown by strikethrough (for deleted matter) and underlining for added matter.

1.-44. Cancelled

45. (Currently Amended) Process for producing a pack made of thin cardboard, ~~in particular a hinge-lid box for cigarettes,~~ with an outer wrapper made of thermally sealable and shrinkable material having folding tabs, including side tabs, and transverse folding tabs and longitudinal folding tabs assigned to an end wall ~~or~~ and a base wall of the pack, the outer wrapper enclosing the pack and the folding tabs thereof being connected to one another in the region of overlaps by thermal sealing, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a blank for forming the outer wrapper and folding said blank around the pack in a tubular shape such that the side tabs of the outer wrapper overlap one another,

(b) then connecting the side tabs to one another in the region of the overlap ~~by tacking and/or by a narrow continuous or interrupted sealing strip,~~

(c) thereafter folding the transverse and longitudinal folding tabs assigned to ~~an~~ the end wall ~~or a~~ and the base wall such that the transverse folding tabs and the longitudinal folding tabs partially overlap each other,

(d) then connecting the transverse and longitudinal folding tabs to one another in the region of their overlap ~~by thermal tacking,~~

(e) next moving the packs upward into a pack tower, where the side tabs are permanently sealed in the region of their overlap by full-surface sealing,

(f) thereafter transporting the pack laterally to a sealing path where the transverse and longitudinal folding tabs are surface sealed, and

(g) the packs with the finished and sealed outer wrapper are then conveyed through a shrinking station, in the region of which the large-surface front walls and rear walls of said packs are subjected to a shrinking process for the outer wrapper by means of surface heat transfer.

46. (Currently amended) The process of Claim 45, wherein the ~~tacking of~~ connecting step (b) involves spot seals.

47. (Currently amended) The process of Claim 45, wherein the ~~tacking step does~~ connecting steps do not initiate shrink wrapping.

48. (Currently amended) A process for folding and sealing an outer wrapper on a dimensionally stable pack comprising the following steps:

providing a shrink wrapping film for forming the outer wrapper;

wrapping the shrink wrapping film around the pack to form side tabs, bottom tabs, and top tabs;

causing the side tabs to overlap one another;

thermally pre-sealing the side tabs;

causing the bottom tabs to overlap one another and the top tabs to overlap one another;

thermally pre-sealing the overlapping bottom and ~~side~~ top tabs;

permanently sealing the side tabs; and

permanently sealing the bottom and top tabs.

49. (Previously added) The method of claim 48, wherein the pre-sealing steps and the permanent sealing steps do not initiate shrink wrapping of the film.

50. (Previously added) The method of claim 48, furthering comprising the step of shrinking the film, after the side tabs and the bottom and top tabs are permanently sealed, by heating.

51. (Previously added) The method of claim 48, wherein pre-sealing any of the overlapping tabs covers less than half of the area of overlap of the tabs.

52. (New) The process of claim 45, wherein the connecting step (b) involves tacking.

53. (New) The process of claim 45, wherein the connecting step (b) involves a narrow interrupted sealing strip.

54. (New) The process of claim 45, wherein the connecting step (b) involves a narrow continuous sealing strip.